

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

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TAGS: PFOR, TW

SUBJECT: HOLBROOKE CONFIRMATION: WRITTEN RESPONSES

REF: TAIPEI 1829

THE FOLLOWING ANSWERS WERE PROVIDED IN WRITING TO THE SFRC
SUBSEQUENT TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE'S MARCH 15
CONFIRMATION HEARING IN RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS
FROM SENATORS PELL AND GLENN WHO WERE NOT ABLE TO ATTEND
THE HEARING IN PERSON:

1. Q. (PELL): WHAT IS THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN
TAIWAN--IS IT SUFFICIENTLY BAD TO REQUIRE TERMINATION OF
AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO THAT COUNTRY? ALSO, COULD YOU GIVE
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ME YOUR VIEWS ON THE PROPORTION OF NATIVE TAIWANESE WHO
DON'T WISH TO BE GOVERNED EITHER BY THE COMMUNISTS OR
BY THE NATIONALIST CHINESE?

A. THERE ARE WELL-DEFINED LIMITS TO FREE SPEECH AND
POLITICAL ACTIVITY ON TAIWAN. OPPOSITION TO BASIC NATION-
AL POLICY IS PUNISHABLE UNDER MARTIAL LAW AND THERE ARE

PROBABLY SEVERAL HUNDRED POLITICAL PRISONERS ON THE ISLAND.
WE REGRET THESE CONTINUING RESTRICTIONS, BUT FORTUNATELY
THE TREND ON TAIWAN IS TOWARD A MORE OPEN SOCIETY. THERE

IS CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL FREEDOM AND THE ATMOSPHERE OF A
REPRESSIVE POLICE STATE IS NOT EVIDENT.

WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE SITUATION WARRANTS A TERMINATION OF
ASSISTANCE WHICH IN ANY EVENT HAS BEEN STEADILY DECLINING
AND IS NOW LIMITED TO \$25 MILLION IN FMS CREDITS FOR
FY 78.

CONCERNING THE LATTER PART OF YOUR QUESTION, WE HAVE NO
WAY OF MAKING AN ACCURATE DETERMINATION OF THIS. OUR
IMPRESSION IS THAT AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE NATIVE
TAIWANESE WOULD BE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO A PRC TAKEOVER
OF TAIWAN. IT IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE HOW MANY OF THE
TAIWANESE OPPOSE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. AGAIN, IT IS
ONLY AN IMPRESSION, BUT WE FEEL THAT THE BULK OF THE
TAIWANESE POPULATION IS RELATIVELY CONTENT WITH KMT RULE.
AN IMPRESSIVE GROWTH IN LIVING STANDARDS OVER THE PAST
DECADE HELPS ACCOUNT FOR THIS. MOREOVER, A CONSCIOUS
EFFORT OF SEVERAL YEARS' STANDING TO BRING YOUNG
TAIWANESE INTO GOVERNMENT AT RESPONSIBLE LEVELS HAS CON-
TRIBUTED TO A MORE POSITIVE TAIWANESE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE
GOVERNMENT.

2. Q. (GLENN): WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL GAINS AND LOSSES
FOR THE UNITED STATES IF WE FORMALLY RECOGNIZE THE PRC?
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A. FORMAL RECOGNITION OF THE PRC LEADING TO THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WOULD BRING CERTAIN
GAINS TO THE UNITED STATES IN TERMS OF EXPANDED TRADE AND
MORE NORMAL DEALINGS BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS. THE
MAIN BENEFIT, HOWEVER, WOULD BE THE CONTRIBUTION THIS STEP
WOULD MAKE TO BRING OUR POSITION IN EAST ASIA INTO LINE
WITH PRESENT REALITIES. ESTABLISHING NORMAL RELATIONS
WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, WHICH IS A MAJOR
PACIFIC POWER, WOULD HELP CONSOLIDATE A NEW PATTERN OF
GREAT POWER RELATIONSHIPS IN EAST ASIA MORE COMPATIBLE
WITH OUR LONGER-TERM INTERESTS.

AT THE SAME TIME, RECOGNIZING THE PRC WOULD INEVITABLY
REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN THE NATURE OF OUR PRESENT
TIES WITH THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA. OBVIOUSLY, THERE IS A
POTENTIAL RISK THAT SUCH ADJUSTMENTS COULD PROVE DESTA-
BILIZING IF THEY ARE NOT CAREFULLY PREPARED AND WISELY
EXECUTED. THE UNITED STATES HAS PUBLICLY AFFIRMED ITS

INTEREST IN A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE TAIWAN QUESTION BY THE CHINESE THEMSELVES, AND THE SECURITY OF THE PEOPLE OF TAIWAN WILL BE A FACTOR IN OUR CONSIDERATION OF THE PACE AND DETAILS OF NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH THE PRC.

3. Q. (GLENN): IS THERE A REALISTIC THREAT TO "LIBERATE" TAIWAN BY FORCE SO LONG AS THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER DISPUTES CREATE PRESSURES TO MASS PORTIONS OF PRC FORCES ON THE COMMON BORDER?

A. A PRC ATTEMPT TO LIBERATE TAIWAN BY FORCE WOULD BE A MAJOR UNDERTAKING WHICH WOULD ENTAIL SERIOUS MILITARY AND POLITICAL COMPLICATIONS FOR PEKING AT A TIME WHEN IT IS PREOCCUPIED WITH THE SOVIET THREAT. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WE THINK A PRC ATTACK IS MOST UNLIKELY.

4. Q. (GLENN): WHAT IS THE RATIONALE FOR REDUCTIONS IN UNCLASSIFIED

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MILITARY SALES AND ASSISTANCE TO THE ROC?

A. THERE HAVE BEEN REDUCTIONS IN ASSISTANCE TO THE ROC, BUT NOT IN MILITARY SALES. GRANT MILITARY AID ENDED SOME THREE TO FOUR YEARS AGO AND FMS CREDITS HAVE STEADILY DECLINED TO THE CURRENT LEVEL OF \$25 MILLION. WE BELIEVE THAT THE ROC'S IMPRESSIVE ECONOMIC STRENGTH PERMITS IT TO FINANCE MUCH OF ITS MILITARY REQUIREMENTS. AS AN INTERESTING ILLUSTRATION OF THIS, IN 1976 THE ROC ENJOYED A \$1.4 BILLION SURPLUS IN ITS TRADE WITH US.

5. Q. (GLENN): WILL THIS ADMINISTRATION SEEK A PRC PLEDGE OF NON-USE OF FORCE AGAINST TAIWAN AS A PRELIMINARY REQUIREMENT TO "NORMALIZING" RELATIONS WITH THE PRC?

A. WE ARE CURRENTLY REVIEWING A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES RELATED TO NORMALIZATION. I DO NOT THINK IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO GET INTO DETAIL ON THIS ISSUE OTHER THAN TO REAFFIRM OUR INTEREST EXPRESSED IN THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE IN A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE TAIWAN QUESTION BY THE CHINESE THEMSELVES.

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